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GOVERNOR PATRICK APPOINTS ELYSE CHERRY TO LEAD MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Appoints Barbara W. Grossman as vice-chair

BOSTON- Tuesday , February 20, 2007 - Governor Deval Patrick today named Elyse Cherry, CEO of Boston Community Capital, as the new chair of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). He also appointed Dr. Barbara W. Grossman, chair of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University, as vice-chair.

"Elyse Cherry is a social innovator who understands that creativity is central to our state's success," said Governor Patrick. "And Barbara Grossman brings tremendous experience in the arts. Together, they will bring steady, thoughtful leadership to the MCC that will benefit the cultural community and the communities it serves."

Cherry said, "I am honored to work with Governor Patrick and his administration in building upon the state's wealth of arts and cultural assets to help realize his new vision for Massachusetts."

Cherry, a former partner at the Boston law firm Hale and Dorr, is CEO of Boston Community Capital, a nonprofit financial institution whose mission is to build healthy communities through socially responsible lending and investing. She has chaired the board of directors of the Opportunity Finance Network, MassEquality and The Center for New Words, and serves on executive boards of the Global Leadership Institute and Wall Street Without Walls. Cherry is a graduate of Wellesley College and Northeastern University School of Law.

Cherry has served the MCC for nearly a decade, first as a panelist reviewing arts and economic development projects. She has been a member of the MCC Board and its Executive Committee since 2005, playing a key role in developing the agency's latest strategic plan. As chair, she will now lead the MCC Board's search for a new executive director.

"The innovative programs and partnerships funded through the Massachusetts Cultural Council promote economic development, advance education, and help create prosperity. They tap into the energy of young people. They remind us about the importance of civic engagement, about the wonder of new ideas, and they reach out to underserved communities," said Cherry.

"Success in our 21st century global economy requires our commitment to innovation, to excellence and, most of all, to creativity," Cherry said. "What better and more joyful way to develop that creativity and build healthier communities than through thoughtful investment in the arts, humanities, and sciences under the leadership of the MCC?"

Grossman is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University. She has served as a presidential appointee to both the National Council on the Arts and the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Council, and counts among her honors the 1999 Hubert H. Humphrey Humanitarian Award from the National Jewish Democratic Council. She is a member of the MassEquality board, serves on advisory boards of the American Repertory Theatre, Tufts Hillel and the Institute for Global Leadership, and is an adjunct faculty member of the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. A graduate of Smith College with masters degrees from Brandeis and Boston University, Grossman earned her doctorate from Tufts.

"As an educator, director, and theatre historian, I believe that the arts enrich our lives and remind us of our common humanity," said Grossman. "I'm particularly honored to serve a Governor who understands that arts and culture can be a powerful vehicle for civic engagement."

The MCC's former chairman, Peter Nessen, stepped down after 15 years on the Board and 11 as chair. He was integral in selecting Cherry as a leader whose wealth of economic development and arts experience will advance the state's efforts to develop arts and culture as economic engines for the Commonwealth.

"I want to express my thanks to my colleagues on the board and the staff of the MCC, for accomplishing so much to foster a deeper appreciation for the cultural treasures of the Commonwealth," said Nessen. "During the past 11 years that I've been honored to serve as Chairman, we have supported many talented individuals and important institutions in cities and towns across the state. I'm confident that Elyse Cherry will help lead the MCC in the right direction in the future."

The Massachusetts Cultural Council is a state agency that promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to improve the quality of life for Massachusetts residents and contribute to the state's economic vitality. The MCC is funded primarily by the state, and through grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wallace Foundation and others. It achieves its mission through grants, services, and partnerships to nonprofit cultural organizations, schools, communities and artists.

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